**Sunday, December 2, 2012**

**Welcome** – Greg Snow

**Call to Worship –** *Matthew 2:1-2, 9-10; Charles H. Spurgeon/Warren Wiersbe*

Hear the word of the Lord from Matthew, Chapter 2:

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him…After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.*

Beloved friends, if wise men of old came to Jesus and worshipped, should we not come also? Let those of us who have long worshipped, worship anew with yet lowlier reverence and intenser love. And God grant that some who are far off from him spiritually, as the Magi were far off locally, may come today and ask, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have come to worship him.”

Jesus was born that you might be born again. He lived that you might live. He died that you might die to sin. He is risen, and today he makes intercession for transgressors that they may be reconciled to God through him. Come, then; believe, trust, rejoice, adore! If you have neither gold, frankincense, nor myrrh, bring your faith, your love, your repentance, and falling down before the Son of God pay him the reverence of your hearts.

Gracious Father,

I have made my decision: I will, by Your grace, worship You and seek to glorify Your Name. Please make me a transformer. May I be used by Your Spirit to make a difference wherever I am. Deliver me from seeking only “an experience.” Help me to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to see Your face, and not to try to duplicate whatever You have done for others. Give me discernment, lest Satan detour me and I become attracted by whatever substitutes he will offer. May I be transformed, and may Your church be transformed! And may great glory come to Your Name as saints unite in worship and sinners trust the Savior! Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

**Song of Praise –** *O Worship the King*

**A Reflection of Your Light –** *(Source: S. Weber)*

Jesus, in Your human birth, You became the very character and expression of God in human form. Miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit You came as light to the world dispelling the darkness that would otherwise overwhelm us. When we walk with You we no longer walk in darkness but have the light of life. May Your light be reflected through our lives to the darkened world around us. The miracle of Your birth and the wonder of Your life refresh our spirit and renew our resolve to follow You wholeheartedly. It is in Your name that we pray. Amen.

**Song of Worship –** *Sing Allelu*

**Let Your Light Shine** *(Source: Kevin Vryhof)*

Amazingly, Jesus shines through us to the world. He transforms us; he leads us. He is Light for everyone. Do you have him in your life?

A Father went into a toy store to buy his son a present. The salesman showed him a new educational toy. It came unassembled, but no matter how the child put the pieces together, they wouldn’t fit. You see, the toy was designed to teach the child how to deal with life. Such is the predicament of a person without God. He is never able to put his life together. A life without Christ is a life of futility.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born to be our Savior. Receive Jesus as your light. Continue to look to him as your light. And then let him shine for you and through you.

**Songs of Worship** *– Jesus, the Son of God/O Come Let Us Adore Him*

**Offering *(“The less worthy I am of His favors, the more sweetly will I sing of His Grace! What if I am the most insignificant of all his chosen? Then will I praise Him who with eyes of love has sought me out and set His love upon me.” Charles Haden Spurgeon*)**

**The Calvary Road – *Luke 2:1-7; John Piper  
  
In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.***

Now you would think that if God so rules the world as to use an empire-wide census to bring Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, He surely could have seen to it that a room was available in the inn. Yes, He could have. And Jesus could have been born into a wealthy family. He could have turned stone into bread in the wilderness. He could have called 10,000 angels to His aid in Gethsemane. He could have come down from the cross and saved Himself. The question is not what God could do but what He willed to do. God's will was that though Christ was rich, yet for your sake He became poor. The "No vacancy" signs over all the motels in Bethlehem were for your sake. "For your sake He became poor."

God rules all things--even motel capacities, for the sake of His children. The Calvary road begins with a no vacancy sign in Bethlehem and ends with the spitting and scoffing and the cross in Jerusalem.  
  
And we must not forget that He said: "He who would come after me must deny himself and take up his cross." We join Him on the Calvary road and hear Him say: "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master,' if they persecuted me they will persecute you" (John 15:20). To the one who calls out enthusiastically: "I will follow You wherever You go!" Jesus responds, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."  
  
Yes, God could have seen to it that Jesus have a room at His birth. But that would have been a detour off the Calvary road.

**Songs of Worship –** *The Power of the Cross/The Old Rugged Cross***Message** – *“Why Men Don’t Follow Jesus”*   
 *Scripture Reference: Matthew 8:14-22*

**Time of Prayer**

**Oberservance of the Lord’s Supper –** *Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26*

**Closing Prayer**